

Year 8 English Exam Revision Notes

The Year 8 English exam will consist of four parts:

Comprehension : A test of your ability to read a piece of text and answer questions about it.

Revision advice: Read attached passage on the E.T. game and then work through comprehension questions attached. This should familiarise you with comprehension skills and the exam format.

Vocabulary: A test of some of the relevant vocabulary that we have learned this year.

Revision advice: Make sure you know the vocabulary we have been learning this year. The extended list of words from which the exam words will be taken is attached.

Text Response: An extended answer on a question about *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

Revision advice: Complete *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* Common Assessment Task, pay special attention to using evidence from the text to support your answer and then attempting some analysis of this evidence.

Additionally, short practise questions can be found at the end of this revision booklet.

Creative Narrative: Write a story based on a prompt.

Revision advice: Practice writing dialogue correctly, make sure you understand that scene and characters are described. Practice writing very brief stories with the pattern of: introduction, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution.

Creative Narrative.

Here are some writing prompts with which to complete a practice story:

1. **Outside the Window:** What's the weather outside your window doing right now? If that's not inspiring, what's the weather like somewhere you wish you could be?
2. **Unrequited Love:** How do you feel when you love someone who does not love you back?
3. **The Vessel:** Write about a ship or other vehicle that can take you somewhere different from where you are now.
4. **Dancing:** Who's dancing and why are they tapping those toes?
5. **Food:** What's for breakfast? Dinner? Lunch? Or maybe you could write a poem about that time you met a friend at a café.
6. **Dragon:** Envision a dragon. Do you battle him? Or is the dragon friendly? Use descriptive language.

Vocabulary Expansion!

In the exam you will be given a list of 16 words and you have to choose 12 and use them in full sentences. Below is a list of 40 from which those words will be chosen. For practice, use each of these words in a sentence. (40 words = 40 sentences).

Analogy – n. a comparison between one thing and another

Pioneer – n. a person that does something nobody else has done

Clarify – v. to make something more easily understood

Contention – n. a statement or argument that establishes your position

Enigma – n. a person or thing that is mysterious or difficult to understand

Ovation – n. loud and enthusiastic applause

Endeavour – n or v. either a significant achievement or the act of creating a significant achievement

Succumb – v. to be unable to stop something from overcoming you

Deface – v. to spoil the surface or appearance of something

Legendary – adj. something that is amazing or worth of becoming part of a legend

Bizarre – adj. very unusual or strange

Memoir – n. a record of someone's life

Tycoon – n. a wealthy or powerful person in business

Gaunt – adj. thin or very skinny, extremely underweight

Stamina – n. the ability to keep doing something for a long time

Facilitate – v. to help to make something possible or easier.

Turbulent – adj. something that is not stable and is affected by confusion or turmoil

Plunder – v. to take or steal everything

Crucial – adj. very important or essential

Humane – adj. decent and how a human should be

Prodigy – n. a young person with exceptional skills or qualities

Inventive – adj. having the ability to think up original ideas or concepts

Muster – v. to gather people together, usually for battle or an inspection

Patriot – n. someone who loves their country

Trepidation – n. a feeling of fear or anxiety

Sting – n. the dangerous part of a bee or v. to feel a sharp pain or burning sensation

Intricate – adj. very complicated or detailed

Tirade – n. a long and angry speech or lecture

Intervene – v. to interrupt and prevent something from happening

Forfeit – v. to lose something as a consequence of poor behaviour

Conservative – adj. reluctant to change or holds traditional values.

Swelter – v. suffering under a strong heat

Chastise – v. to strongly reprimand or criticize someone

Articulate – v. to pronounce a word or idea clearly and distinctly

Sporadic – adv. a thing that only happens randomly or occasionally

Infinite – adj. something that is never ending, or at least seems that way

Encroach – v. to get too close to something

Elite – adj. amongst the very best at something

Atrocity – n. a particularly horrific crime or event

Foreboding – n. or adj. a feeling that something bad will happen or a thing that gives the impression of being foreboding

Reading Comprehension Example

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Worst Game Ever?

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial is a video game that came out for the Atari 2600 game system in 1982. It was based on a very popular film of the same name. It cost over 125 million dollars to make. Star programmer Howard Scott Warshaw created it with consultation from Steven Spielberg. And it is widely considered to be one of the worst video games ever created. The massive failure of *E.T.* and its effects on Atari is an often-mentioned reason for the video game industry crash of 1983.

It was July 27th, 1982. Howard Scott Warshaw was hot off the success of his most recent game, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. He received a call from Atari C.E.O. Ray Kassar. Atari had bought the rights to make a video game version of Spielberg's movie, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, which had just been released in June. Kassar told Warshaw that Spielberg had specifically asked for Warshaw to make the game. Warshaw was honored, but there was one huge problem. Atari needed the game finished by September 1st in order to start selling it during the Christmas season.

It had taken Warshaw six months to create *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The game he made prior to that took him seven months. He was expected to create *E.T.* in around five weeks. Warshaw just did not have enough time to program the game properly, but he accepted the challenge anyway and production began. Spielberg wanted Warshaw to create a simple maze game, similar to *Pac-Man*, but Warshaw had a bigger vision. He wanted players to explore different environments in a 3D world. Warshaw followed his vision.

Atari anticipated that the game would be a huge success. Usually companies like Atari have people test games before releasing them. If there is something that testers really dislike, programmers can fix it before the public gets a chance to play. Atari decided to skip testing due to time limitations. They wanted the game released during the holiday season. It was: *E.T.* was released in December of 1982.

The game sold very well at first. It was a hot holiday item. Unfortunately, Atari overestimated how many they would sell. They made 5 million copies and they only sold 1.5 million. Most people who played the game hated it. The graphics were bad. Game play was awkward. Players got stuck in holes that they couldn't escape. A short time limit made the game difficult to explore and frustrating to play. Some people who stuck with the game grew to like it, but it wasn't the mainstream success that Atari had hoped it would be.

Too many copies of the game sat on store shelves. One employee remembers the game being discounted five times, from \$49.95 to less than a dollar. Many people returned the game. Atari was left with millions of unsold copies. In September of 1983, a newspaper in New Mexico reported that between 10 and 20 semitrailer truckloads of Atari products were crushed and buried at a landfill in Alamogordo. Perhaps a million or more copies of *E.T.* were buried in the desert. When word got out, the drop site had to be covered with cement to prevent scavenging.

Atari lost over \$100 million on *E.T.* The game was so bad that it was said to have affected Atari's reputation. The video game industry soon fell into a deep depression. In 1983 the industry made \$3.2 billion. By 1985 profit fell to just over \$100 million. This was almost a 97% drop. Many critics believe that Atari's blunder on *E.T.* was one of the causes leading to this depression. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* will long be remembered as one of the worst video games ever made, if not one of the causes of the decline of the entire video game industry.

Comprehension Questions

1. Which of the following is **not** a reason for the failure of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*?

- a. The programmer was not given enough time to finish the game properly.
- b. Atari did not test the game before its release.
- c. Atari made too many copies of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*.
- d. The game was released on a new system that only a small number of people owned.

2. Which of the following were effects of the failure of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*?

- a. Perhaps a million or more copies of the game were buried in the desert.
- b. Atari lost over \$100 million.
- c. The video game industry sunk into a deep depression.
- d. All of the above

3. Which of the following was **not** listed as a reason why *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* was considered one of the worst games ever?

- a. The soundtrack was annoying.
- b. The graphics were bad.
- c. A short time limit made the game frustrating.
- d. Players would get stuck in holes.

4. Which of the following events happened first?

- a. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* video game was released to the public.
- b. The entire video game industry sank into a deep decline.
- c. Steven Spielberg suggested that the *E.T.* video game should be like *Pac-Man*.
- d. Atari buried millions of cartridges and game consoles in the New Mexico desert.

5. Who programmed *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*?

- a. Steven Spielberg
- b. Ray Kassar
- c. Howard Scott Warshaw
- d. Elliot Thomas

6. Why did Atari decide to skip testing *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*?

- a. Testing was too expensive.
- b. Spielberg would not allow testing.
- c. They were in a hurry to release the game for the holiday season.
- d. Testing video games was not common until after *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* was released.

7. According to the text, which group of people would like playing *E.T.*?

- a. People who really enjoyed watching the movie
- b. People who liked playing fast, fun games
- c. People who stuck with the game despite its flaws
- d. People who enjoyed playing *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

8. Which of the following statements is true?

- a. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* was one of the worst selling games of all time.
- b. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* sold a lot fewer copies than Atari was hoping it would.
- c. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* was one of the best selling video games of all time despite its flaws.
- d. Every copy of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* ever sold was eventually returned.

9. Which is **not** a reason cited in the article why *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* should have been successful?

- a. It was based on an extremely popular movie.
- b. The gameplay was smooth and enjoyable.
- c. Atari spent over \$125 million on its production.
- d. Howard Scott Warshaw programmed the game.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas Practise Questions

Choose from the following to practise exploring written responses to the text.

Is Bruno's father a good person or a bad person?

Does Bruno deserve to die?

Describe the people in the camp. Describe Bruno and Gretel's relationship.

What evidence is there in the book to show us that Bruno's family is rich?

What kind of house did Bruno live in in Berlin?

How does Bruno's mother feel about leaving the house in Berlin?

Why doesn't Bruno understand the nature of his father's new job?

Is Bruno's mother a good mother?

Some of the characters in the novel are quite complicated people. Give examples of this.

What kind of person is "The Fury" and why is this important?

How do the Nazis try to justify their behaviour?

Does Bruno understand the reality of Shmuel's situation?

Who do you think is most responsible for Bruno's death? Why?

How does the novel show that the Nazi's claims about Jews are untrue?

Why don't any of the characters do more to stop what is happening at the camp?

Is Bruno brave or a coward?

How does the novel show that Jews and Nazis are not really different from each other.

The novel shows us many contrasts. Discuss some examples of these.